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Older Partner Selection in Young African American Men Who Have Sex with Men

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INTRODUCTION

Young African American (AA) men who have sex with men (YAAMSM) 16–24 years of age have experienced the greatest proportional increase in new HIV cases compared to other adolescents and young adults.¹ Bridging sexual partnerships between YAAMSM and older aged cohorts, with higher rates of primary HIV infection and prevalence has emerged as an independent risk factor for development of HIV in YAAMSM.^{2–4}

Despite potential HIV risk in age discordant partnerships, YAAMSM make seek older partners to fulfill interpersonal or developmental needs and/or because cultural contexts promote age-discordant partnerships. Cultural contexts relate not only to geographical or physical structures that these men live in but also the emotional and ideological environments where they reside.⁵ Herdt's work suggests that same-sex sexual development includes attraction and erotic desire for a person of the same gender and cultural identity involving the social, political and economic practices within a cultural group.⁶ Gay and bisexual adolescents of color usually rely on organizations, social events, and the Internet to

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Implications and Contribution:

Young African American men who have sex with men (YAAMSM) may seek older partners to fulfill important developmental needs, needs not fulfilled by families, and for exposure in the larger community. Effective prevention programs will need to address social needs youth desire during sexual development, provide condom-negotiating skills in a developmental context, and address larger ecological issues impacting youth.

assist in developing their sexual identity, but in cities with limited community based organizations for young gay and bisexual men of color youth rely on informal role models, such as families or social networks with older men, to learn about cultural norms.^{7, 8} Young MSM who are displaced when they are stripped of basic familial financial or housing support are more likely to rely on older men with financial resources to survive.^{9, 10}

Adolescents tend to be attracted to others based on similar social characteristics (homophily)^{11, 12} and tend to select romantic partners because of physical attractiveness and body appeal.^{13, 14} Amongst gay, bisexual, and other men attracted to men, physical features, such as a well-developed upper-body build and youthful appearance, have been described as key components of attractiveness and may vary by relationship type, with individuals narrowing preferences in long-term romantic relationships, while widening preferences when seeking someone solely for sex.^{15, 16}

Attraction to a partner is not equivalent to a behavioral pattern of seeking older partners and each process may reveal very different phenomenon.¹⁷ This work explores the complex relationship between sexual development, culture and interpersonal needs met within older sexual partnerships of YAAMSM by focusing on 1) being attracted to and 2) seeking an older partner.

METHODS

Study Population and Design

We recruited seventeen adolescent and young adult men, 16–24 years old, who reported having had sex with an older male partner (>5 years older) to participate in semi-structured qualitative interviews. Participants were recruited using snowball sampling, social network Internet advertisements (18 years), and from an academic adolescent medicine and young adult clinical practice in a community with high STI/HIV rates and serves low-income patients and families. Most (70%) were recruited through snowball sampling (Table 1). Youth, with no history of older partner, were excluded from this analysis. The final number was based on informational redundancy, the point at which no additional data was gathered from interviews.¹⁸ The age range was chosen to examine differences between developmental groups and according to average age of first same-sex experience.¹⁹ Written consent was obtained from all participants. A waiver of parental consent was granted through Johns Hopkins School of Medicine Institutional Review Board.

Participants completed one in-depth face-to-face, semi-structured interview lasting 90 minutes followed by a 10-minute sexual risk behavior questionnaire administered by a single female interviewer (first author). The questionnaire collected information on demographics, relationships, HIV history, and sexual health. Questionnaire items were derived from prior studies assessing STI/HIV risk in adolescent MSM.²⁰ Participants were reimbursed US \$45 for their time and transportation.

The interview focused on the participant's romantic relationships and sexual experiences. A team consisting of a qualitative researcher, an expert in sexual development and researchers with experience working with YAAMSM developed a semi-structured qualitative interview guide. The guide was grounded in phenomenological and constructivist frameworks that provided a general structure for discussion but required participants to provide their own definitions based on life experiences and perceptions.²¹ Questions elicited content and meaning and allowed participants to elaborate on responses, clarify ideas and feelings experienced within romantic relationships (Table 2).

Qualitative Analysis

Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Two coders independently evaluated transcribed data to identify and collapse codes and key themes that emerged from data. The transcript was double coded until coding had high inter-rater reliability (Cohen's Kappa >0.80).²² Coding disagreements were discussed by reviewers and recoded upon consensus. We analyzed data using categorical and contextualizing analytic methods.²³ We first deconstructed narrative data and rearranged those data by categories in order to facilitate comparisons. We examined participant's responses using a contextual strategy to examine adolescents' responses within the developmental and social context of their lives by comparing experiences of adolescents whose older partnership occurred at younger ages (18 years old) to experiences of those occurring during at later ages (19 years old). Qualitative analysis software (Atlas ti; Version 7.0. [Computer software] (1999) Berlin, Scientific Software Development) was used to facilitate coding and analysis. To ensure quality and credibility of the emergent themes from qualitative interviews, we performed a member-checking interview validation check²⁴ (after first 5 interviews were complete) with one gay and one bisexual AA man 19–24 years old to respond to initial interview themes and identify additional areas for inquiry.

RESULTS

Two themes emerged from the text around seeking an older sexual partner: (1) emotional maturity the older partner represented and (2) ability of older partner to expose the younger partner to more life experiences; and two themes emerged around attraction: (1) financial and instrumental support and (2) physical attractiveness of the older partner. There was considerable overlap between phenomena, with participants describing emotional maturity and support as reasons for seeking and being attracted to older partners. Seeking older partners for experience or exposure in the gay community was a theme that developed only in adolescents and young adults who described having older partners at a young age (18 years old). The themes are presented with quotes from the interview text (Table 3). Pseudonyms have replaced names or places to ensure participant confidentiality.

Emotional Maturity

All participants, regardless age difference with partner or age at sex described seeking older partners because older partners connoted stability within relationships, represented the potential ability to settle down into something more long-term and were used to avoid risk from having “sex only” relationships (Quote 1). Youth, excluded from this analysis because of no history of older partner selection, chose same-age partners because of the perceived HIV/STI risk that an older partner had. Both processes suggest that seeking or not seeking an older partner maybe a sexual heuristic that some adolescents use to avoid risk.

Participants equated the ability of an older partner to “know what they want” with being more stable and less likely to have erratic feelings or emotions within the context of the relationship. Older men were perceived as less likely to play games with partners and more likely to be direct within relationships (Quote 2). Many also described this as an attractive feature of these men.

Participants also described that older men were “established” and represented an example of a gay man who had reached his goals in life, and someone youth aspired to become. “Becoming established” represented “emotional maturity” and “perfection” in life (Quote 3).

While, participants described being attracted to older men because of features associated with success – emotional maturity, attainment of goals and financial success, these features also sometimes resulted in an imbalance in the relationship. In those situations, participants

described feeling that their opinions were not respected because of their age or lack of experience. Such circumstances resulted in the relationship's dissolution.

Experience

Participants, whose first experience with an older partner occurred during adolescence (18 years old), described that older partners provided them with sexual experience and exposure to the gay community. Because of limited resources and support from family or friends, older partners were used to answer questions about being AA and gay; or support them through their sexual exploration. Older men provided younger men with exposure to community and social events.

Participants commonly described seeking an older partner in the beginning of sexual development when exploring sexual desires with other men or for the desire to have someone to demonstrate how to perform sexually (Quote 4). As a result, multiple participants described seeking older men online or in chat rooms in order to lose their virginity with a more experienced partner. The older, often more experienced partner not only determined sexual position during the experience, but also helped to orient them to general sexual performance and sexual role sorting (top, bottom and versatile) (Quote 5). Commonly participants described their first experience as uncomfortable, or being torn between feelings of captivation that an older partner was interested in them and disgust following the event (Quote 6). Very few described that the first experience as pleasurable. When they described that the experience was enjoyable, participants described that older partners were intimate with them, helped them to sort through sexual role, and used condom in a respectful way (Quote 7). While the participant in this last quote described condom use and feeling respected, the age and developmental discordance with this much older partner, is likely to limit the youth's ability to articulate concerns and negotiate within the relationship.

In work focused on heterosexual age-discordant relationships, the power differential between the adolescent and older partner has been a key determinant in condom use within the sexual partnership because of high amount of power the older partner has.^{25, 26} Fields,²⁷ in a sample of qualitative interviews with young MSM 18 to 24, found that condom use was not discussed in sexual partnerships when there was a power differential, especially when the partner was 10 years older. While the prior youth described that "everything was respected" and a condom was used, most of the other youth described that they were either uncertain that a condom was used or that the partner often did not use a condom. Another common occurrence among participants, regardless of timing of first event, was alcohol or other drug use immediately prior to first experience to help them "relax."

One described that having been the insertive partner to an older male twenty years older allowed him to feel more sexually fulfilled because it confirmed to him that he was sexually dominant (to older partners) and provided him with higher sexual status among his same age peers.

Support

Several described that older partners were able to provide the youth with support they were not receiving from their families. Sometimes the support was financial, and was often described as making the youth feel protected or good about themselves. Participants described that older partners demonstrated their affection through gifts or instrumental support and reflected how much the partner wanted to be with them (Quote 8). Others described being attracted to the emotional support that older men provided. The emotional

support often filled a void that families were not providing. It consisted of supporting participants in their interests and being present during community events, fashion shows, and activities that mattered to them (Quotes 9, 10). A few participants who had been displaced from home or forced to take on larger responsibilities early during adolescence described being attracted to older men because these men filled a void their fathers had not provided, including providing for and protecting them (Quote 11).

Physical Attractiveness or Swag

All participants, regardless of age, described physical features and how older men carried themselves (“swag”) as the primary reason for being attracted to older men. Participants often could not articulate what “swag” meant, but could describe that it was an “air” that was attractive. It was tied closely to emotional maturity and confidence (Quote 12). This confidence was viewed as a feature that could overcome behavior that was generally viewed as negative (Quote 13).

The men described several parameters with regard to physical attractiveness, including being well groomed, muscular physique, and appearing slightly younger than stated age. Seeking men that appeared youthful was a common theme among all men, but especially among younger men who described desiring older men that seemed closer to their own age. Others described that complete development made older men attractive (Quote 14).

Social Context

A common theme that emerged was the context and social environment youth met older partners. Those whose first sexual experience occurred with an older partner described meeting their sexual partner online or in a chat room. Participants described going online to meet similar peers or using the Internet to gain information, find events or meet potential partners. A few youth described using the local gay chat line to meet partners because it was instantaneous.

Several described being displaced from their homes after coming out to their family and friends around the same time as having sex with their first older partner. One HIV positive youth describes leaving home after coming out to his family and finding older men for housing and emotional support (Quote 15). This participant’s quote is an example of how alcohol or other substance use during early sexual experiences can impair a youth’s ability to adequately use condoms for protection against STI and HIV and the potential victimization that can occur.

Two men described seeking older partners for the sole purpose of exchanging sex for money or goods. One described having been displaced from his home and living on the streets. He subsequently turned to prostitution as a means to survive. While most of these sexual partnerships resulted from financial disadvantage of the youth, one participant described continuing in the partnership for companionship and intermittent social support. The two youth who described participating in exchange sex also described a history of child sexual assault by family members that had been reported to local authorities. Gay-related stressful life events, victimization, social rejection, and isolation have been significantly associated with high-risk sexual behavior and substance use, factors which can increase an adolescent’s risk for STI and HIV acquisition.^{28–30}

DISCUSSION

Published studies on age discordant partnerships focus heavily on HIV risk.^{2–3} In this work we found that YAAMSM sought older partners to fulfill desires for emotional maturity, experience, and support. Few described being attracted to or seeking older men for the sole

purpose of exchange sex. We found that emotional maturity was the main reason youth described seeking older partners. This supports findings from an earlier study of men 19 to 42 years old that also described young MSM being attracted to older partners for emotional maturity and mentorship.³¹ Such attraction and behavior may reflect normal adolescent psychosocial development during which adolescents are more likely to adopt codes and values of larger peer, parental or adult groups and become more focused on future orientation.³² As a result, YAAMSM may find characteristics such as emotional maturity, success, and physical markers of success (being well-groomed) in older men physically attractive because of the desire to have similar characteristics in the future.

This finding is developmentally congruent with being attracted to older partners who potentially represent future physical characteristics the youth desire and may vary by relationship type. In this sample, participants described wanting to limit long-term romantic partners to men who appeared around their same age, in order to have someone to develop emotionally with. Among the ten men who were in a sexual relationship, only two men reported being in current long-term or serious partnerships with older men. Grogg¹⁶ has suggested that MSM narrow their partner's desired age range for long-term relationships, while worrying less about partner's age during casual sex partner.

Older partners also provided younger men with experience and exposure to the larger gay culture. Bruce found that in cities where there is limited to no gay-identified institutions or organizations for AA youth, adolescents are more likely to use informal structures (Houses, informal gay parents) that serve as alternative families.⁸ Such informal structures may create a social environment that relies on older AA gay and bisexual men to serve as mentors for younger men to learn the language, rituals, symbols and expected behavior of being/acting within the gay culture.³³ Membership in informal structures like Houses has also been associated with increased sexual risk and exposure to older partners with a high HIV prevalence.³⁴

Participants also described meeting first older partner on the Internet while searching for information and looking for local events. The Internet has been recognized as an important way for youth to connect with one another and learn about gay culture.³⁵ These interviews suggest that youth may be using the Internet to find first same-sex partner. First sex with an older partner helped to orient some to general sexual performance and sexual role sorting (top, bottom and versatile). This supports prior work that has demonstrated first sexual activity with a member of the same gender helps to validate an emerging sexual identity, learn sexual norms, and categorize experiences as "appropriate" or "inappropriate."^{6, 36, 37} It also suggests that the purpose of first sexual partnership with older partner may be different from youth who seek older partners at older ages.

The relationship between older partner and sexual position emerged in this sample among youth who described first same-sex experience with an older partner. Research has suggested that sexual position roles as insertive or receptive are influenced by cultural and social concepts of sexual identity, gender role and masculinity.³⁸ These interviews suggest that sexual role may also be influenced by age, experience, and timing of first same-sex sexual experiences. With younger adolescents uncertain about sexual role and unable to negotiate condom use in the receptive position, this relationship is likely to create a power differential between the older and younger partner and cause condom non-use in the younger (often receptive) partner.²⁷ Most of the youth who described being the receptive partner during first penetrative sex described condom uncertainty or non-use and often felt a loss of control during the event. An adolescent's inability to negotiate sexual position and condom use during first same-sex experience may partially explain why having an older partner in an

adolescent's sexual network contributes to high rates of HIV acquisition in young AAMSM.²

Participants also described being attracted to and seeking older partners for emotional, financial and instrumental support that the participant's family had not provided. The need for financial and emotional security potentiates the power imbalance within age-discordant sexual partners where older men may take advantage of younger men who are in vulnerable social situations. Some also described use of alcohol and/or other substances prior to sexual experiences, further increasing their vulnerability by impairing their ability to prevent STIs and HIV through effective condom use. In a multiethnic sample of 200 young MSM, 15–22 years old, Bruce found that receptive anal intercourse while intoxicated was the only risk factor for having a much older partner (five years or older).¹⁹

At this point, we need to better understand the process by which adolescents navigate sexual identity development disclosure to families, and engage in early sexual experimentation. Given potential risks associated with age-discordant relationships, additional support to improve condom negotiation skills and to enhance use is essential. These interviews suggest that most YAAMSM seek older men for characteristics that youth desire, exposure to the larger gay community, and to provide benefits that families may not provide. This contradicts the assumption that younger men are being forced into sexual relationships with older men.³⁹ Instead, it suggests that there are broader reasons that include social situation and personal desires that contribute to the development of partnerships. Additional work is needed to understand what socio-cultural factors influence sex partner decision-making in YAAMSM and why some men may desire older sex partners, despite the potential risk these partners may have.

Limitations

The findings from this study must be considered in light of several general limitations. The focus of this work was to examine older partner selection from the perspective of AA adolescent and young adult men. It uses the voices of participants during different stages of adolescence and the phenomenological framework allowed youth to describe the process of seeking older partners using their own words. The validation procedure, consisting of feedback from youth and adult experts, was another methodological strength. However, this work examines older partner selection in a small sample of YAAMSM living in urban community with high rates of STIs and poverty. The multiple sampling mechanisms (clinic, internet, and snowball sampling) were used to attempt to recruit a representative sample of men, but findings from this work may not generalize to all YAAMSM who may living in other areas such as rural or suburban communities that are socially more isolated or large urban centers with extensive youth oriented gay and bisexual support resources for youth. These findings also may not generalize to adolescents who seek racially discordant older partners and so cannot address the impact of ethnicity and culture on partner selection patterns and/or potential risk for HIV acquisition. We also chose an age difference based on prior studies,³ but these cut points do not allow for a comparative analysis between youth who are in sexual relationships with men who are in much older age discordant relationships. Furthermore, participants were interviewed at one time point and without subsequent interviews we are unable to understand how older partner selection may change as youth develop.

Implications

These interviews represent an important first step for understanding age-discordant romantic and sexual partners of YAAMSM. This work suggests that YAAMSM may seek older partners to avoid risk and for perceived emotional maturity. It also suggests that in

communities with limited supportive resources for YAAMSM, youth may rely on older partners to learn about gay culture. In order to avoid older partner selection in YAAMSM, families will need guidance and support to assist young men as they develop their sexual identity and potentially engage in early sexual exploration. More community-based programs will also need to be developed to address the social and ecological issues impacting YAAMSM during this vulnerable period. Resources that are usually provided as a part of the adolescent and young adult's parental safety net such as housing, protection, and financial resources, are often withdrawn from YAAMSM making the need for easily accessible, youth-friendly community-based support services that expand the safety net and provide counseling and comprehensive sexuality education for YAAMSM critical. Community organizations that focus on serving LGBT youth have been shown to potentially buffer the negative effects of displacement, stigmatization, and social isolation YAAMSM may experience in their families and local communities during adolescent development⁴⁰ and to fulfill important role in healthy identity development for sexual minority youth.

Additional research is needed to better understand partner dynamics of age-discordant relationships, steps involved in partner meeting and relationship development, impact of first same-sexual experiences on future partner selection and sexual risk-taking behaviors, and protective strategies that allow healthy adolescent development among YAAMSM while reducing the risk for HIV acquisition.

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Table 1Demographic Characteristics of the Study Population (N=17)[‡]

Characteristic	N	Mean (SD or range), %
Mean Age		20.2 (2.16)
16–20 years old	8	47
21–24 years old	9	53
Sexual Identity		
Gay or homosexual	15	88
Bisexual or bicurious	2	12
STI History	6	38
HIV Serostatus		
HIV negative	13	76
HIV positive	4	24
1 st Same-Sex Experience		
Mean Age of 1 st Experience		15.5 (1.3)
Older Partner during 1 st Experience	5	29
Mean # of partners in 3 months		2.5 (3.5)
Current Partner Status		
Not in a current relationship	5	29
Exclusive relationship with 1 partner	7	42
Non-exclusive sexual relationship	5	29
Current Older Partner (> 5 years) [*]	2	12
Recruitment [#]		
Snowball sampling	11	65
Internet advertisement	2	12
Academic clinic	4	23

[‡] Men described partners as Black or African American.^{*} The two men who described having a current older partner had partners who were > 10 years older.[#] Men recruited through the clinic were more likely to report a positive HIV serostatus than men recruited by other methods (p<0.01). No other statistically significant demographic differences were noted by recruitment type.

Table 2**In-Depth Interview Sample Questions**

Topic	Question
Oldest Sexual Partner	Tell me about the oldest person you have ever had sex with.
Looking for (seeking)	Let's talk about what you were looking for with this older partner.
Attraction	What attracted you to this person?
Sexual Position	When you had sex with this partner what sexual position or sexual role did you perform in (for example, were you a top (insertive) or bottom (receptive) partner)? Let's talk about who determined the sexual position during the sexual experience.
Social Context	Describe what else was going on in your life when you had sex with this person.

Table 3

Themes and Quotes from Participant Interviews

Theme	Representative quote	Age at time of sex
Emotional Maturity	1. Like I feel a lot of younger people date older people because honestly and I'm going to speak on it, in my age bracket there aren't a lot of people that actually wanting to be in a committed relationship. All they want is sex. So young people who do want relationships they feel oh if I go to this older man I know he's ready to settle down. He wants a relationship so I'd rather be with him and be happy and content versus dating someone my age where I can't be content. Our relationship won't last three minutes or three months. (-Pause-) So that was my case.	Participants Age 17; Partner's age 24
	2. Yeah, because they're serious, and they know more of what they want. They're not for the mollycoddling or the rigmarole, they're just like for the point, that this is what we're doing, this is what I'm looking for.	Participants Age 19; Partner's age 27
	3. I was 18, he was 29. Right. So at that point it was-- he had all of the qualities that I was looking for but at the same time something didn't seem right for me. But I just went along with it and see where things would go. After that-- after got sort of in a relationship, after about three months I found out that he had a wife, three children and two houses....He was a busy man that could afford it, because at that point he had owned his own business and all that other stuff. So I guess that's what attracted me more because he had his head on his shoulders, he had a future. He was living what his dream was.	Participants Age 19; Partner's age 29
Experience	4. The experience factor does play a big part into it because it's very important to have somebody with experience. But even if you want to teach somebody something, you got to have both aspects of that in your life. Somebody that you can teach. Somebody who'll teach you. You don't want to be no dummy.	Participant's Age 23; Partner's age unsure
	5. I was 17 and I was dating someone that was 24. And with him I found it to be very fun and adventurous because I got to explore different types of things like I was going to the clubs at 14 and 15, but then I stopped going to the clubs for a while. And when I met him it was like he got me back into going to the clubs. I met a lot of different gay guys through him. I found myself urging more of being a top and less being a bottom.	Participants Age 17; Partner's age 24
	6. And I was just really nervous, and basically it was just like, "Take off your clothes." And I did it, and we proceeded to do things, and-- Well, he wanted me to suck his dick, and I did, and he said I was doing it wrong, and then I was just like, "Okay." And then he wanted to have anal sex with me, and we did, and it--Yeah, he wanted to be the top. And it hurt a lot, and just it was very-- it was horrible, the first time, basically. And then he wanted me to do him, and I was just like, "No, I'm going home," because I just felt horrible. So I left."	Participant's Age 18; Partner's age 24 or 25)
	Interviewer: What attracted you to him? Emanuel: I don't know, I guess the fact that he was older. When I was 18, that seemed like, "An older guy is talking to me. This is new and exciting.	
	7. "He penetrated me and it really wasn't hard, you know? I just bent over, he was, like, okay, just take it and I took it in. He would kiss me and hold me and that's when I really noticed I was, like, okay, well, this is where I become a bottom. That's when I started learning about the bottom/top, and I thought, okay, well, I'm a bottom. I experienced it and I loved it. It really wasn't no point of unprotected sex. We didn't have unprotected sex. Everything was respected. He respected me."	Participant's Age 13; Partner's age 26
Support	8. Like, when I came home for Christmas, like I swear, I haven't had a good Christmas in like the past two or three years. He bought me some-- he bought me a Mac gift card. He bought me some UGG boots. He bought me this Beyonce DVD and CD. I had a really nice Christmas, and I was really appreciative for that.	Participant's Age 16; Partner's age 21;
	9. Like, I've been in a lot of fashion shows. He comes to all of my shows, all of my dance recitals. Like, everything, like everything that I do, he is there. Like, and when I say everything, I mean, everything. Like, in terms of like helping me like, with my line, he's there, like everything like, in terms of school. He helps me with school, because we both want to do the same thing, but the only difference is he's waited like three or four years before he went back to school, which I really don't think he's going to go back to school, because he's been talking about it for too long and hasn't done it.	Participant's Age 17; Partner's age 22;
	10. I was looking for it to fill that void that I had still from my parents, and not feeling accepted from them still.	Participant's Age 18; Partner's age 25;
	11. I would say typically people look to their father as like a protector or provider or something to that effect. Like he had those qualities to do all of those things which was new to me. So it just appealed to me...And that was different because mind you, like all in my family because my stepfather wasn't there, I always looked to for support. So I was constantly working. I was working	Participant's Age 21; Partner's age 36;

Theme	Representative quote	Age at time of sex
	in school in college and things like that. And I'm constantly working, working, working to support my family. So they're pulling from me and I had nobody to pull from...So I'm just like finally, somebody I don't have to do anything for because I'm always doing something or giving expectations and things from my mom and my little brother and things like that...So in a relationship I was looking for something different. And like that's what he really represented for me.	
Physical attractiveness or Swag	12. "He was very suave, and charming to me. And most younger people that I've met don't have that. It was just something very like movie-star-ish about him, I guess. If that makes any sense... Yeah. Like he dressed very nicely, like an older person, and always smelled like expensive colognes and had expensive things. And I guess that was attractive."	Participant's Age 21; Partner's age 38;
	13. "His swag. That's what I think it is, because it's like a geeky, but it's like really cute, but he could still be masculine with it. I don't know."	Participant's Age 17; Partner's age 22;
	14. "Well now that I'm older and I understand sex and I understand a male's body and the role their organs play, I find it more attractive. I find it more sexy and appealing to be around a fully grown man and see like everything, it just turns me on every time I see a man, every time."	Participant's Age 21; Partner's age unknown;
Social Context	15. "No one in my family knew that I liked guys and that's when it came out one night I was on the phone with my ex- boyfriend and I just felt like it was a lot of tension between me and her so I became more rebellious and I actually met Brian who was older. I would say about 26. And I ran away and went to stay with them for a while. I didn't go to school. And I was angry at the time because I'm like, you know, "You're my mom and you're the one that I came out to and told about my sexuality and I felt that you distanced yourself from me." So I was really angry, upset and I told her "I don't have anything to say. I don't have no family. Like leave me alone. I don't want to be bothered." So that's when I ran across the 40 year old and he took me under his wing as my gay father. And whenever me and my mom would get into it I knew I can always go to his house. So I ended up staying there but I didn't really pay it attention but at the time I found that he was attracted to me. I found out he was HIV-positive and at that time I really didn't know anything about it. So yeah- HIV. So one particular night I guess he was intoxicated and I was really, really, really horny at that time and me being horny, me being young, having a couple drinks at that time I really didn't know how to handle alcohol so I just fell into it like he could have asked me anything at that time and because I was intoxicated I probably would have told him yeah."	Participant's Age 16; Partner's age 40;